J.B. Bittinger

Martin Luther

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Martin Luther

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MARTIN LUTHER.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE

CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
ALLEGHENY, PA., NOV. 9, 1883,

BY

J. B. BITTINGER, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
SEWICKLY, PA.

[PHONOGRAPHED BY THE REV. E. P. HAWES.]

CLEVELAND:
WILLIAM W. WILLIAMS,
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CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

In consenting to speak to you this evening, on the subject assigned me by the Presbytery—Martin Luther—I confess to a sudden feeling of responsibility. I ask myself this simple question: what would, you if your character were to be traversed to-night—what would you want the man who spoke about you to say? I answer:

> Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice—

Now, though Martin Luther is dead, his name lives, and he has a reputation; and he has a reputation not to be misrepresented, but to be drawn, if drawn at all, as it was, for I believe that he had the courage in this respect of Cromwell, that if he had a mole on his face, he wanted the artist to put the mole into the picture, and yet he did not wish to be stained with false colors. It is really a very serious thing to undertake to speak about one's neighbor—about the dead—a man, over whose grave and work there have been great controversies—controversies that interest every one of us. But, while I think the undertaking is serious, and difficult, my mind is thoroughly resolved that, I shall deal honestly with the subject, according to my knowledge of it.

However, I am embarrassed by another consideration, and yet it is not altogether a disadvan-

tage; strange enough the public press has taken up wonderfully with this topic. They have favored us with articles longer and shorter on the great reformer; they have summarized his character and his life; they have been carried, by their enthusiasm, beyond their wonted descriptions, and given us illustrated papers on this theme. Now, there is about this very diffusion of a knowledge of the facts concerning Luther, the embarrassment to which I refer: "for, what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which hath already been done": and the press is King. Everything has been said, and though, if I were to say it for the first time, it would interest you and instruct, for the tale is marvelous; but now it has been rubbed so threadbare by repetition that, when I touch upon the facts which you know, I am afraid you won't give them the weight and credit which belong to them as facts, because, forsooth, you have already seen all this in the daily papers.

Well, I will run the risk of telling the story over again, and I shall address myself to those, who, perhaps, from the multitude of their daily cares, have not time even to read the newspaper: the busy housewife, who has too much to do after breakfast and before also, to turn to this monitor, adviser and historian; and the business man, more bent on the prices current, and the ledger in fact, than on "lives of great men,"—if he has committed himself to this place, I trust, I may speak a

word that shall be to the honor of Luther and to the edification and entertainment of this hearer also.

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, November 10, 1483. His parents were emphatically poor and pious, and that is a great heritage to be born to. The regimen of the house was strict. It was the day when the commandment "Honor thy father and mother" ranked equally with all the other stately commandments, and when it spoke, it spoke with authority. It was the day, moreover, when faith in the saying of Solomon: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes,' had not yet died out, or altogether faded into "moral suasion."

Amid the harsh traditions and habits which, had grown up under this reading of the word of God, Luther as a child had hard fare, especially, because he had a hard father. Not that his father had no affections, for a man may have strong affections, and yet his passions may be so turbulent, and his convictions of duty so indurated, that, against his own flesh and blood, from a sense of duty to God's law, he may harden his heart; and besides, the poor boy Martin was born with a large heritage of his father's temper and temperament. He was one of those boys whom you can thrash and thrash again, but whom you cannot subdue, your passion simply kindles the fire of his passions, and he would die, rather than seem to yield. It was a

sad heritage for the boy, it made his life at home a constant terror to himself, and a constant torture. Many a night would he creep stealthily to his bed in the loft—for that was the common sleeping-place—and in the cold and dark of that garret, would shudder at the thought, that his father might ask for him—and come for him ; and yet the father, with all his sternness, when he did climb into that garret, to know what had become of his truant boy, when he came to the cot, yielding to softer impulses, could kneel down, and could pray for that boy, as only a father can pray for a child.

And when this boy went to school it was with him, probably, as it was with Edward Everett, who, speaking on the subject of education in our schools, said he belonged to the "flogged generation." Luther lived in an age when everybody was born in that generation. They were all flogged! The traditions of such school-keeping have come down to our own times, at least to my recollection ; though it may not rain floggings as plentifully now, as it did when the boy Luther, according to his own statement, was flogged fifteen times in one day! I don't know what else the teacher did on that day, unless it was flogging! Fifteen floggings because a boy didn't know his accidents, or for some other fault in his learning. This was the atmosphere of the school. It was rigorous ; it was cheerless ; it was to sensitive natures terrific. But Luther was sturdy as a boy,

and he was sturdy through his life. He was none of your whimpering, whining boys or men, who wished to make an apology for sharing the common lot of men or boys, or who thought that he was dealt with more harshly than anyone else. He suffered such things, and he got the interpretation of them in these words: "It is well to bear the yoke in one's youth." There were many days and years coming, when the floggings of home and school were but the thinnest vapor compared with those dark clouds, which gathered later into great tempests, from which the thunders roared like ten thousand beasts of prey, and lightnings flashed that made men's souls quiver; but the boy that could not be flogged out of his convictions, could not, as a man, be scared out of his convictions either. He was made of good timber and it would take great storms to break or founder that vessel.

In due time Martin was sent from home to further his education. He went away because there were no good schools at Eisleben, and because, as a charity scholar, as a singing boy, he might possibly pick up a precarious living by chanting and begging; for that was a part of school discipline, and so he spent, after he had reached the age of fourteen, a year at Magdeburg. Then he came back, and with the ambitious purpose of his father went to Eisenach, where there was a better chance for singing, and a chance for getting a better edu-

cation for singing, and where, it seems, moreover, he had a relative, but a relative of such a hard and close nature that the boy was like to starve on the relationship. But God, who has his own way of providing food for the ravens, did not fail the child whom he was bringing up. Whatever it may have been in the life of Luther, whether it was an accident, or a part of the mysterious rule of a divine providence; as he was following his singing vocation through the town, his voice attracted the notice, which afterwards procured him the patronage of Dame Cotta, a woman, doubtless, who was the portraiture of what Luther says is the noblest conception of which the human soul can lay hold. "There is nothing sweeter on earth than the heart of a woman in which pity dwells." He sang and her heart was touched, and from that hour, she took him to her own home, and in that house he had enough to eat, and there received that part of his training, which I am afraid the narrow circumstances, and the hard lot of home did not permit him to pick up. That is: a little of the *suaviter in modo*—a little bit of that culture, which rubs down the exterior roughness of all men, but especially as it was necessary it should be rubbed down in the case of Luther, and which worked in upon his nature and developed the best parts of it—for his was emphatically a soul that opened up to kindness,—that unfolded its better self to the gentle touch of a sympathetic woman.

After spending four years at Eisenach, he passes on to Erfurt, then the most distinguished school of law in Germany—since then gone to decay. There it was his purpose—his father's particularly, as it was a famous law school—that he should prosecute studies for the law. While here, he made that discovery, which has since been heralded through all Protestantism, in the form of a legend, concerning the Bible. Now, my christian friends, Luther was not born a heathen. He was brought up in a Christian family. He had often listened to the voice of the psalms in the breviary. He had heard the sound of the scriptures in the daily lessons. Doubtless he had heard them at home. But when he opened the Bible, he found that here, instead of a few grains of gold from the washings of the river of truth, there was a solid mass of the precious metal refined, and free for any one to take, what each one wished. To find, that beside the scripture lessons of the day, and the scraps that were patched upon the sermons, here was every word that had proceeded out of the mouth of God,—that was the discovery.

But to a man or a boy who was hungry; to one who was looking for knowledge; to a youth whose heart had already opened up, in some measure, to these things, this was indeed a discovery! He was led on from one step to another, his religious convictions growing deeper and deeper, until at last it seems that Luther had nothing to think of,

but Luther as a miserable sinner; as a man, who desired pardon, and yet knew not where to go for it; as a man laboring with the greatest of all human problems: "how shall the sinner be just with God?" At this problem he worked honestly, prayerfully, tearfully. Led along in the way in which God leads that kind of soul, until at last driven by conscience, driven by fear, driven by the sound of hell, which rumbled in the distance, and echoed in his poor soul,—whither should he flee? Where was the shadow of the great rock in the weary land of this man's pilgrimage? Where could such a one go, in that day, if he did not take refuge in a monastery? These little places, that the church of the middle ages, had built; these houses of refuge, refection and reflection; choice spots guarded by angels, and where men, under vows of poverty, obedience and chastity, absorbed in these things, separated from the world, should give themselves to prayer, and "lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they might lay hold of eternal life." He could not help himself.

Where, think you, would a man go now, who is tempest-tossed and troubled in respect to his salvation? Where but to some house of prayer, hoping that some one could speak to him "all the words of this life." Against his father's wish, (but he had now reached his majority) against his father's protests, actually incurring disinheritance,

he goes into a monastery, to be a man of prayer, to be that, which we, in our rabid Protestantism, have learned to despise under the term of "monk." There were all sorts of monks in that day, and Luther was of such a sort that, if the world and the monasteries had been filled with his kind, there would have been no Reformation, we should have needed none.

Here the man worked in the same line with the spirit of God, and the word of God. After making distinguished progress, in these studies and others, he was called from there to lecture in the new university on philosophy and physics—two subjects about as remote from that which then engaged his heart, as you can imagine any two subjects, to be. But this, also, was a preparation for other things yet to come. And so in the University of Wittenberg, established to gratify the pride of the elector Frederick, the Wise, of Saxony, a university not under the supervision and control of the Pope, and therefore not bound by the fetters of traditions, which emanated from Rome; but a new university on a new model, and which was underlaid by the Bible as the book which was to be taught. And thus the man who had discovered the whole Bible for himself, and who had found, in its words, comfort for his soul, found that very book at the foundation of the University to which he was called.

After laboring there a short time in the philo-

sophical departments, he became a teacher of theology, and the very first thing that he comes to is the Bible itself. He opens up the Book of God. He begins on the Psalms—the deepest, and sweetest and most human of all the books of the Old Testament; the book, in which the souls of godly men, exposed to the sunshine of divine favor, have exhaled as the flowers do—their best essences. In these Psalms, God's saints of old decanted their inmost spirit of joy and sorrow. And out of these deep "wells of salvation," Luther drew supplies for himself, and supplies for his hearers. Then, stepping out of the old covenant, we next find him expounding Galatians and Romans—Galatians being as it were an abridgement of Romans; a sort of short Roman sword that could not be broken, and which the soldier could use even after being bent under his shield, and, on his knees. That short, decisive, clear utterance in respect to the great question: "How should man be just with God?" That was his New Testament book. That was the book which he affectionately called by the name of his wife, "Meine Kaethe von Bora," so dear was it to him. It contained the whole marrow of the gospel, and into it he poured all his experience, as he then had it.

I think, however, if you were to read his commentary on Galatians, you would find a great deal more of the Pope wrought into it than you might think necessary to explain it. But you must

not forget that the Pope stood very close to Luther's eyes; and if his holiness had been a smaller man than the Pope of the sixteenth century was, he would have obscured a great many things, and would have seemed very large. But, my hearers, you must also remember that the Pope represented all the power that God had delegated to man upon the earth. Kings were not simply his counsellors; they were his servants; and all the hierarchy flowed down from him, as a stream flows from its spring, in the mountains. He was the fountain of all honor, of all power, of all knowledge. He spake the last word, and sealed it with his own infallibility!—not then a declared article of faith, but yet implicitly held. Therefore, that the Pope appears on every page, and seems to be the great antithesis to what Luther is expounding, the background of everything which he explains, will not seem strange, when you "put yourself in his place."

This man works on. He is an indefatigable worker, a veritable Titan. His working power is simply incredible. It is indescribable. It is almost inconceivable, when I tell you that he lectured every day; that often he preached every day, and, on some occasions, three times a day, and that he combined with this a correspondence, which was immense,—filling chairs, tables and floor with unanswered letters; also the entertainment of his friends, for he laid a hospitable table, and

his going upon public errands of every sort. He had work enough to do for a half dozen clerks and as many amanuenses. In a single year he put out one hundred and eighty publications,—one every other day; and such was the demand on his time, and such was his response to it by his industry, that he just swept like a strong swimmer everything before him, and made his way through it. I don't wonder that he was always sick. I do not recall a single public errand upon which he went that he was not taken so sick while he was going, or while he was there, or while coming back, that they hardly knew what to do with him. He was taken sick at Bologna when he returned from his pilgrimage to Rome. Sick at Eisenach on his way to Worms; sick when he went to the Diet at Augsburg, many of these spasms, so severe like the one at Schmalkald, that after he got there, he could not stay. So tormented was he by his great enemies, vertigo and 'the stone,' that he had to be carried home, by easy stages to save his life.

That man always liable to be taken sick, and doing all this work; he had the working power of the steam engine. What gave him this power? The conviction of duty—so deep that he could not rest; and he did not rest. So he works on. He infects men by his example, throws his whole heart out upon them. He is not only a man of convictions, but his convictions are to him a part of

himself. He is possessed. He has a fire in his bones, and woe to him if he does not let it burn out. It glows in his face. It gives tone to his voice. It kindles enthusiasm everywhere, especially in the hearts of the students who listen to him. They flock, not simply from Germany, but the name and fame of Wittenberg reaches out, and the bruit of it is heard away over in the Netherlands, up to the Baltic, down to the Adriatic, and across the seas, in England and in Scotland. From all countries came students, Bible in hand, to sit at the feet of this wonderful man, who explains God's word. Four hundred students crowd into his lecture-room to hear him. Wittenberg overflows with students—cannot lodge all of them in houses, and puts up tents, I believe. The little church in which he preaches is soon too small. There must be church extension, and he must be promoted to a place that is large enough to hold the eager multitudes that hang upon his lips. So he becomes the city pastor of Wittenberg.

He does not speak to the people in Latin. He is not a scholastic in his methods, neither in his illustrations, much less in his language. He is a German to his heart's core. A plain peasant's son whose ancestors, for generations back, were peasants, and in whose brawn is nothing but peasant blood, and whose blood was only that of sturdy, honest, genuine peasantry; he speaks his

mother-tongue, the speech which always captures the heart, and speaking in this tongue, (and no man ever spoke his mother-tongue better), we are not surprised that the 'common people heard him gladly.'

Now he rises up higher and higher, and his fame grows farther and farther. But he is not taking care of his fame. He has too much to do to think of what he is doing. He is driven from behind. He is impelled from within. He is lifted up from above, and if you define 'enthusiasm' to be 'the God within us,' he seems to have the indwelling of divine power. When this man was wrought up so that he brought out in his physique, in his pose and posture, what was in his soul, I do not wonder that you find his body and head thrown backwards, with his hair like a lion's mane streaming behind, and his high forehead looking small because of his lifted crest; his strong neck clothed literally with thunder like Job's war-horse, and his eye—no man ever yet was satisfied that he had described it. To Kissler he seemed falcon-eyed. Melancthon thought it was the eye of a lion; those immense gold rings which bound the pupil, which was dark as night, and piercing as the lightning, looking right into your soul—a man whose eyes terrified Cajetan. He could not understand these marvelous orbs and penetrating speculations which lay at the bottom of those "demonic eyes," as

Alexander calls them, for they are inexplicable to him also. But this was Luther, and when he was thus stirred up, though only of medium size, I marvel not that he made the impression, that he was a giant, and that when he spake, his own words were like the words of St. John, "every one of which, he said, weighed three tons"; and when he hurled them at his opponents, it was as when the giants in Milton took up the hoary tops of hills, and the air was filled with the elemental strife.

We follow this man up yet higher, for he still lives and works unceasingly. Taking no care of his name nor his fame, but God took care of that; caring not for money, for he never took a cent for preaching; caring not for money, he never got a cent for all his myriad publications; caring not for money, like Agassiz, he could not afford to work for money; but working on like a slave with only his university salary, and the occasional presents which the magnanimity of his public friends chose to bestow upon him. And he was rather chary of presents. He knew the corrupting power even of a present; that what people give as a pledge of affection, giving it regularly tends to corrupt the receiver, so that he looks upon that as a right, which is only a privilege. Luther knew his own heart. He knew all hearts.

So he kept working on, and now his eyes begin to take in the poverty and wretchedness of the

people; and like our blessed Saviour when he was out in desert places and was done speaking, and saw that the people were weary and had a long way home, he could not dismiss them. They had listened to the words of truth, but they must also be fed. So Luther saw the sheep 'without a shepherd, or a shepherd who was a hierling and cared not for the sheep,' and his honest heart bled for this poor flock which was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

And so at last the hour struck when a new revelation seemed to reach him. And this was the occasion, when the people began to see how the prodigality, if not the profligacy of the popes consumed the money which flowed in a steady stream into the papal treasury. The papal court squandered it on magnificent buildings and wasted it in luxurious living; they spent it as extravagant men easily spend a great deal of money, until the very sources from which it came, in answer to piety, seemed threatening to dry up; and the more so, for when the old St. Peter's was pulled down, because it was too little, and in order that the ambition of Julius II. might be gratified by putting up something worthy of the Christian world, and worthy of St. Peter himself, then the decree went forth that Rome and all her wide-lying dominions should be taxed; and the tax was laid upon souls. It was the price of sin. It was the cost of redemption. France would give noth-

ing, for the French king was not on the best of terms with Rome. England would give nothing. Spain would give nothing, and there was nobody left, but these 'patient Dutch,' who, then already had a reputation of submitting to a great many heavy burdens, and not murmuring; who had there putation not only of patience, but also the reputation of great piety and devoutness, and that whatever was assessed, Rome confidently counted upon their loyalty to pay it; and so what France would not pay, and Spain would not pay, had to be doubled over and laid upon Germany; her broad back and her subdued heart would, at least, attempt to carry it.

But Luther, educated now in the doctrine in which he himself had found the peace of his soul —that a man is not justified by works; that there is not this roundabout way to get to Christ, through a long process of hard, self-castigation, self-flagellation; doing works of penance and sorrow for the heart and the mind and the body, but a short way; and a direct vision and interview with Christ himself, which was simply: to trust God and take him at his word. When God said, "Come to me," he meant that the door was open; when God said, "If a man will forsake his sin and turn unto the Lord, he will have mercy upon him and abundantly bless him," that was better than a bond. So when "the indulgence pedlar Tetzel" came into his neighborhood to raise this tax by

selling indulgences for sins that were past, and sins that were passing, and sins that were yet to come, there was a regular tariff, running from a small figure down as low as a quarter of a guilder, up to the very handsome poll-tax of twenty-five guilders, then Luther's soul rose up in indignation. This thing must not be. It should not come,—into the domains of his elector. It should never put its profane foot into Wittenberg. It should not come within calling or corrupting distance of where he lived, and where the true gospel was known. And they didn't get nearer, I believe, than Jueterbogk, some ten or twelve miles from Wittenberg, and there the curse was stayed; but the men and women from all that region had gone out and bought these permits. Why shouldn't they?

My hearers, when people are sick, there is no patent medicine that will not be patronized—if it is in the market; it does not matter, whether it is bread or sawdust. When men are sick, they want to be healed; sick men want remedies, and the man that stands at the head of the street and says, "here is the remedy," is the man who will be patronized. And these people were sick. They had an incurable disease. They knew that 'the soul that sinneth it must die;' and with their theory: that if they did not die outright, and go direct to perdition, it was at best the underside of Heaven —purgatory—that they should have to occupy for

an indefinite period,—until touched by pity or piety, the grace and favor of their neighbors, their kindred or some one else, should purchase their liberation.

They went in crowds. The men of Jerusalem, who went down to John and the Jordan to be baptized for the remission of their sins, were not more than those who streamed to Tetzel and his coadjutors, and his commission for raising this money—to buy letters of indulgence—free papers for the past, and good for the future. They brought them to Luther, and each one that was brought was like so much fuel added to the fire of his indignation. He would not receive them; he knew that they were useless, that they were false; he knew that all this was only an additional burden to sink these poor ignorant souls still deeper into the mire.

Now then, as having a heart for his wretched countrymen, for poor souls, if he could do nothing else, he could challenge their betrayers, and on October 31st, 1517, he nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the castle church. We have all read about those ninty-five theses, and quite likely, if we were to read them, the first impression on our mind would be that there was an immense amount of repetition in them, and an immense amount of subdivision; and so there is, but that was the scholastic fashion. It was like those methods of sermonizing which obtained in Scotland one hundred years ago, and which still linger in some conser-

vative pulpits, when Erskine, for instance, would divide a sermon into ninty-nine divisions and subdivisions. This much dividing did not put any more gospel into a sermon, neither, it is to be hoped, did it diminish the amount that was in it, and so the nine-five theses did not increase the amount of truth, nor did they diminish it. It was the scholastic mode of stating it. Of course they were in Latin. The discussion was not in a language which the newspaper reporter of that day, if there had been any, would be able to catch with his pencil, make a rapid sketch or abridgement of it, and bring it out in the next edition. Nothing of that sort, it was addressed to a very different class of people. Luther knew that a great crowd was coming to Wittenberg, of Catholics, of learned men, those of the old order, and he puts up those theses, as was customary, and said he was willing to debate them with anybody—orally, or by writing—anybody that would come there.

But little did he think, when he nailed up the theses, what was coming. Next morning when they were seen, and the next day and the next week, literally, as it was described by a contemporary, they were put on the wings of angels; they cut the air in every direction; they carried the message north, south, east and west, and all Germany rose up as one man. So excited were they by this subject thrown upon them. There was a ripeness for it. Large numbers of those people had been

oppressed in the matter of indulgences. They felt it keenly at this time, when they were being taxed, terribly taxed, for what they had come to believe was a sham and a falsehood. The money which came so hard to them was wasted in riotous living, costly architecture and the Turkish war, it may be, or what not. Fires were smouldering in their souls, and the least breath blown kindled them into a blaze. So the work goes bravely on.

Now then, Luther was the only man whose name was known to all Germany, and more than that, the only man whose name was known to all Christendom. And what should be done with this man? Will you try him by commission? He was too large a man for that. And though Leo in his jesting, easy way, a thousand miles off, could say that this was nothing but a squabble between the Dominicans and the Augustinians, and I don't doubt there was a good deal in Luther and Tetzel, belonging to different fraternities, which gave greater zeal to Luther as well as to other good men—but Leo thought that was all; that it would all blow over, and soon.

But now it appeared that what at first "arose as a cloud like a man's hand" began to cover the whole northern hemisphere and looked dark and threatening. And so Luther is cited before the diet, one of those august public meetings, when the Empire sat upon great questions of state, when the Emperor was there, when the King was

there, when the electors were there and the bishops and archbishops, and always a legate from Rome; when all that was learned and impressive was collected within some imperial palace, in some free city of Germany. And before such an assembly Luther is summoned to give an account of himself.

The poor man sets out, not at his own expense. I may well say 'poor.' He was poor in money, and he was poor in other ways. But the city of Wittenberg had a pride in him. The city preacher as he was, he was well backed by his fellow-citizens. They gave him a pass to Worms, and on he went by easy stages. It was not the going of a common man. He came and went 'with observation.' And as he traveled from Kingdom to Kingdom the whole popultaion came out to meet him, and to greet him. So he entered city after city, Leipsic, Erfurth, Gotha and Frankfort, preaching as he went, and calling louder and louder in the interests of reform—preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. His journey was like a royal progress. Two thousand of her citizens went forth of the gates to salute him, and when he came to Worms the whole city was stirred. The royal trumpeter announced his approach from the cathedral spire, and amid the waving of banners, and the shouting of the multitudes, this poor monk, with his 'three escorts from Wittenberg' in a Dutch cart, rode into the free, imperial city of Worms. And so

crowded, so thronged and so tumultuous was the desire to see him, that corridors and windows and balconies and every available 'coigne of vantage' was occupied by the populace, to get a look at this monk; many fondly believed they should see his satanic majesty, and by back-ways and alleys he was taken to his hotel. When he appeared before that council, which one can hardly imagine in its magnificence, it was as a single monk in frock and cowl against all the dignitaries of an Empire on which the sun never set.

Here he is confronted with this simple question: "Are those books yours?" and there was a whole stack of them. I don't know what the simple soul left to himself would have said. He was unused to the ways of the great world. But his counsellor, Schurff, knew better. He had the lawyer's sharpness. He knew it was not worth while to confess guilty before it was proved, and he suggested that they would have the titles read. Well that was as long as an introductory exercise to read those titles; for Luther had been writing all the time, don't you see? And so they took up the titles, and they read, and read, and read. And then again, "Were those his books?" Yes, they were. And the second question was this: "Do you recant?" Well, Luther said that some of those books treated of simple gospel truths, these he could not recant. Some were upon abuses of religion, them he could not recant.

There were a few books there, which were polemical, and in which, perhaps, he had spoken unadvisedly—possibly he had used some words, as men writing on religion sometimes do, which were neither consistent with religion, nor with such rules of propriety, as ought to govern gentlemen; anything of that sort, he would be willing, of course, to take back, but as for the rest he must have time to think.

So the monk goes home to pray, and the great diet also resolves itself, and goes home to sleep. Luther prays, prays long and often during the night. He is very much beaten down. In sooth, he did appear to very great advantage, on the first day. He was rather dazed, and I don't wonder; it was Luther against the world.

But next morning, refreshed, he goes before the Council, and the day's deliberations begin. After much talking to and fro, which lasts till nightfall, he speaks two solid hours in Latin, then repeats the same in good German. Then they hear the Gospel, for the first time, many of them. For those who do not understand the barbarous German, it must be told in Latin—for their Northern Majesties, for the courtiers of the South Country, for the Netherlands, and especially for Italy. Again he is asked to revoke. Eck goads him with rebukes, accusations, finesse, and then it is that Luther makes the reply, so hackneyed by repetition, but not the less memorable and sublime: "Popes

have erred, and councils have erred, and unless those things can be refuted or contradicted by certain scripture, my conscience is bound by God's word. Here I stand; I cannot help myself. God help me. Amen."

Whatever others who were outside might have thought as to what would become of this man, the Diet of Worms felt that Luther had conquered. Charles V., in his imperial robes, had never seen such a man as this; the man in whom God, by a deep conviction of duty, spake. I do not wonder that the rough soldiers, who stood at the door, and afterwards, among those that greeted him on the street, there were those who were willing to offer him a glass of beer, and give him their congratulations, because he had done well; and when the poor man got home, exhausted and covered with perspiration, he should simply say: "I have got through! I have got through!"

This may be considered the culmination of Luther as a man, training himself upward. It is a long, steep, rugged and hard ascent, but he has reached the top of that eminence on which victory perched, and from which he can look over all that comes after him, and hear these words: "All this territory will I give thee."

Then 'the sower went forth to sow.' He went in every guise,—as merchant, traveler, student. We know how the march of armies has introduced new seeds into foreign countries. So sol-

diers disseminated the doctrines of the Reformation. The German soldiers of Charles V., and his Swiss emissaries carried these new notions to the siege of Milan, and the sack of Rome. Refugees from 'Bloody Mary' brought the same seed from England, and sowed it in the Netherlands, and parts of Germany. Wherever business or persecution scattered them, everywhere they went preaching the Reformation.

From this time on to the Diet of Augsburg, where the Church of the Reformation presented its immortal canons, its twenty-one positive and its seven conditional articles, Luther's life was an anxious, busy and patient one. The same unselfish, courageous man! The same man who by his comprehension—and I hardly know by what other term to define it—seemed to lay hold of everything about him. The hearts of all men, apparently, turned towards that man; those who sympathized with him, because they sympathized; and those who even disproved of his course could not but admire his courage and his self-control.

Following this crisis, events of a public character crowd so rapidly that one can hardly keep the run of them. Tetzel burned Luther's theses, and the students, the enthusiastic listeners of Luther, saved Luther the trouble of burning Tetzel's, by burning them themselves. And when the bull was fulminated against Luther, and he was put under the ban, he had the heroic courage then, to burn

the bull, and to get up early in the morning, nine o'clock by the bell, on Monday. He didn't put it off to the end of the week, nor to the end of the day, but his soul was full of courage and purpose, and so, early on Monday morning, he had it burned in the public square of Wittenberg. That was the gauntlet thrown down to the Emperor and the Pope. Henceforth there were two Popes; the Pope that sat on the Seven Hills by the Tiber, and the little Pope, who had taken his seat on the banks of the Elbe. The battle is set in array. The conflict wages to and fro, and back and forth, through many weary years. Luther is growing old, but he will not leave the field.

And now let us turn aside to another picture. When Luther left the Diet of Worms he could not go home safely, because it is very well known what became of Huss at Constance; and his friends cannot trust him on a safe-pass, though made out by the Emperor, and so they have taken him off, and shut him up on yonder crag, in the Castle of Wartburg; and there he sits down at once to his beloved Bible. He studies Hebrew, and Greek also, that he may take this New Testament and turn it into genuine German for the German people. Ten months he works at that task. Afterwards through long and laborious years of toil, public and private, he finishes the translation of the Old Testament also, with the co-operation of such of his friends as

Jonas and Bugenhagen, Cruziger, and especially Melancthon.

When he gave the German Bible to the German people, he at once allied himself to thousands and tens of thousands of men and women, who were willing to die for the word of God, and the truth as they had felt it in their own hearts. Why, if Luther had done nothing else but translate the Bible—giving the translation to the German people that he did give them, he would deserve to be immortalized. For remember, while the word has often been translated, and will again often be translated, for God's word is of this character it will never cease to struggle, until it has brought itself all out upon the surface, and made itself intelligible You cannot shut up God. Luther's version is one of the seven great versions of the world—one of the seven wonders of literature, taking rank with the Septuagint, the Peshito, the Vulgate and the translation of Ulphilas, Tyndale and our own Authorized version. It stands on that high platform.

Moreover, it is in the language of one of the ruling nations of the earth. When Luther put the Bible into German, he allied it with a tongue, that should speak to millions upon millions of people for ages to come. When Luther put the Bible into German, he allied it to a people who were warriors from the beginning, warriors who brought contempt and confusion upon the legions of Rome, over-

ran Rome itself and to-day are the foremost people on the continent of Europe. My hearers, it was not an accident that Luther translated the Bible into the conquering language of a conquering people.

Again the fetters of a foreign tongue were struck off, "and the word of the Lord ran and was glorified." The river of God though 'full of water' had hitherto flowed in the channel of the vulgate—deep and dark as Jacob's well. Inaccessible to the people, and remote from common use; the Luther Bible lifted it intonthe sunlight. Henceforth its 'living streams' should water all the Fatherland. The German Bible has also been the source and vehicle of German literature. Germany adopted the Bible as its national text book, and so loyal and laborious have they been in their studies of it, that the contributions of German scholarship to the science and literature of the scriptures, are more in number and value than the contributions of all other nations put together.

Now then, where did the Reformation have its hold upon this people? In the first place, Luther was a German of the Germans; 'the Fatherland' was dear to him, he was born in it and made out of it,—there would he live, there die, and there be buried; in it all his affections were rooted. Now, Germany was sacred territory, and I speak advisedly; and the German people were a holy nation in this matter, as I shall show you; and Luther

was the man whom God raised up to speak to the people in their own tongue. And now, if you will put the compasses down upon the map of Germany, with one leg upon Wittenberg, and sweep the other with a radius of a hundred miles, you shall find it will enclose nearly all the great cities and centers from which influences went out in the Reformation, and which have become historic. There are Torgau, Magdeburg, Eisleben, Erfurt, Zwickan and Leipsic, and many others that we haven't time to mention, lying on the bosom of the Elbe. It is a small territory, but it is 'the promised land;' it is the fulcrum over which, a mighty man with a tremendous lever, is prying up the nations. The whole earth shakes and reels as the giant turns in his uneasy bed. Like a tidal wave the Reformation spreads northward into Scandinavia, it flows eastward into Hungary and strikes against Bohemia, it goes south to the Jura. over the crest of the Alps, and the spray of it dashes away down into Italy itself. It breaks against the Pyranees; even Spain gets some of its drops; some of the dry places of France become standing pools. It submerges the Netherlands, it flows like another gulf stream across the channel, laving the whole coast line of England and Scotland with its mild waters.

But after a while we look again, and what do our eyes behold? We see that France is not Protestant. We see that Spain is not Protestant. Portugal is not Protestant, Italy is not Protestant,

and Ireland is not Protestant, and, away off, to the farther east there is no Protestantism. There is only one Protestant country, or rather, only one Protestant people. Except in sporadic instances, you do not find Protestantism outside of the Teutonic race. The Romanic people did not take Protestantism then. They do not take it to-day. That is the fact. The lines which the first fifty years of the Reformation established stand to-day. Conquest after conquest at the outset drove back the medieval church, but, after a century of oscillation, both parties finally rested where they are to-day, and there never has been any conquest on either side of that line, neither for Protestantism nor for Catholicism. That also is a fact. Hence, I say, this was the Holy Land. It was in Prussia, (Saxony was in the center of this continental empire) but it was in Prussia, the Prussia of to-day, that the church planted her standard then, and set it up for Protestantism. There rules to-day the only Protestant Kaiser, and *Unser Luther* speaks in the language of that land and people.

Now observe, yonder lies Scotland. Scotland had its own reformer. It was a reformation not unlike that of Germany—a popular uprising. It was headed by a man not unlike Luther in courage and convictions, but he worked on a small territory, yet not unsuccessfully, for he wrought among this same Teutonic people, and they took the Reformation. The northern part of Holland,

where this same blood had spread among the population, also became Protestant, and so intensely Protestant, that it fought the whole empire, and Alva, the implacable, could not burn it out, nor destroy it by the sword. Every time it touched the earth in its humiliation, it rose again with new power, and vindicated the race among which it was planted. Sweden and Norway and Denmark and Iceland are Protestant to-day. But what has become of Belgium? Of Bohemia? They were not Teutonic, neither are they Protestant. This also is a very great and grand question.

Now then, go back to another point. The monument at Eisleben, erected to Luther, has three panels; one of them is a domestic scene, another is Luther at the Leipsic disputation, and the third is Luther translating the Bible. These are three characteristic things in Luther's life. I have spoken to you about the Bible, which he laid upon the hearts of the Teutonic people, and as we saw, they have kept it ever since very close to their hearts.

Now Luther was also a disputant. He loved controversy, yet when he went upon the polemic stage at Leipsic, he had a nosegay in his hand. It is a pleasant little thought that this man weighed down with such great cares of church and state, could not forget, and did not forget 'the flowers of the field.' That he loved those things, recalls the wisdom of Solomon, and of one who was

wiser than Solomon. And when I find him writing to his friend at Nuremburg for garden-seeds, and sending to Erfurt for radishes, and little things of this sort, I find this man Luther is keeping his heart warm and tender, by laying it close by the side of everyday matters. He is not too good nor great for common uses.

The panel which represents him as a disputant is one that brings him oftenest before us. Luther was a good fighter. There was much fighting to be done; somebody must do it, and Luther had a stomach for it. He had that irrepressible, tumultuous temper, which he got from his father, and from which he suffered so much. But it was "the northern iron and steel", which God wrought into his soul for a fit purpose, and now these are the days of his warfare; for "the Lord has taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight." Now that he must meet the enemies of truth and righteousness, you want a fighting man; that is, a man that has courage—not to draw the sword of persecution; and let it be spoken here, to the eternal credit of Luther and Lutheranism, that Luther never drew the sword and never counselled the drawing of it for such a purpose. He believed in "the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." Amid the tumults of the empire, with wars and divers plottings, and all sorts of combinations, even against his Elector and against his own State, he urged the citizens of Wittenberg

to bear arms under the empire against Turkey—but not to go to war among themselves. This was Luther. But he was "a man of war from his youth" notwithstanding that. That is, he had convictions, and for these convictions he was ready to do battle in every possible way, except the shedding of human blood. Yet, in self-defence of the truth, he was willing to have even that shed.

Luther was also a good hater. His enemies were not abstract, but concrete antagonists. He hated the Pope, he hated the Jews, and he hated the Sacramentarians—not simply their opinions, and something of personal animosity warmed his controversial blood.

> He is mad, 'tis true * * *
> And pity 'tis, 'tis true.

And when you have this man armed thoroughly, armed rather dexterously, there were very few men in that day, very few individual men, who were willing to meet Martin Luther in a dispute. There were men that knew more Greek, that knew more Hebrew, more theology, than he did. I guess the mild Melancthon—the woman of the Reformation—I rather think he knew more, both of Greek and theology. Also, there were men who knew more of other things, but there was not any one man in Germany, that could use as many weapons, at the same time, as Martin Luther. He was a dangerous man to meet in a disputation

because he not only had convictions, but he had arguments; and where he generally had the advantage of these men with whom he fell into dispute, was that in every disputation he would always come back to the Holy Scriptures. As he came back to them at the Diet of Worms, with 'Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise.' At the conference of Marburg, when Zwingle and Oecolampadius came up there to talk about the sacrament, Luther is said to have written on the table, on whose opposite sides the contestants sat, the words, *Hoc est corpus!* This is my *body;* this *is* my body. That was the Scripture; so he read it. He did not understand it. He tried to get a glimpse of its dim outlines. But whatever it said to him, it said to him with all the authority of a direct communication from God, and he could not release himself from it.

And now follow him through his life, and you will find that, it is true as he said, the thing that he loved above all others was God's word, and next to that his wife. You have perhaps seen the doggerel rhyme—I don't know where the distich comes from, but I have seen it:

"Gottes Wordt und Luthers lehr
Vergehet nun und nimmer mehr."

"God's Word and Luther's teachings are eternal." I suppose it may sound conceited and presumptuous; but he built upon the apostles and prophets, and, building upon them, he felt that

wherever they went and endured, his word would also go and endure. Luther's loyalty to God's word had in it something almost romantic. He was inseparable from it. Where you find it, you find him, and where you find him, you find it. "Thy word have I hid in my heart." A single word bound him, as witness the Zwinglian controversy, and the Landgrave bigamy, but his views on the canon were liberal to a degree.

Now, then, respecting this good man's home-life; why, it would be a very pleasant thing to while over it. It would comfort your hearts to find at how many points he touches us here. Go into his house, and there is music and dancing. Here are the children climbing up on his knees, and clambering all over him; one to show him this and the other one to show him that. And here is the good man with his lute. He learned to play that when he was lame; when he couldn't do anything else but that. He could not afford to be idle even then. Here is the good man playing, making music, to the melody that there really was in his great, sad heart. I think it is true what he says in his "Table-Talk"—I understand it to be so—that refrain which has been dragged out with intent to disparage him:

> "Wer nicht liebt Weib, Wein und Gesang,
> Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang."

Which may be Englished in prose, "That the man who does not love wine, and music and woman,

is a fool, out and out, and as long as he lives." Now, I think that, upon the whole, the words may stand as true. You know what Shakspeare says about music:

> "The man that hath no music in himself,
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, strategems and spoils;
> * * * * *
> And his affections, dark as Erebus.
> Let no such man be trusted."

Luther could be "trusted," if he could be, on the score of his love of music; and that he loved his wife—surely that must be always orthodox among all of us, who love the charities and purity, and the nameless and indefinable charms and securities of home. Home is one of the words, which is particularly "at home" among the Teutonic races. It is the one strong word that is in the mouth of every German; and whatever you may think of his ways and means of living here, or any other where, *frau und kinder* are always included in his idea of 'having a good time.' And as to *wine*, I don't know that I ought to be allowed to say anything on that subject; but as this is an occasion, which will not occur again, for four hundred years, there won't be any trouble, I trust. I remember that Luther says of a certain place where he used to get wine, "It was good wine; there was no garlic in it." And that the beer of Torgau was not good, for they had put cobblers' wax into it; and he was down on adulterations of this kind.

He wanted his beer "straight"—he was a straight man. He wanted his wine unadulterated, as he was an honest man; and if we must drink wine, we all agree that, to be good it ought to be pure. Now, then, on this question, let me say that Luther was an out-and-out temperance man. It was one of the griefs of his heart, that the people of Wittenberg, as they increased in wealth, indulged themselves in excess of drinking. It was a German fault then; it has not improved since. He complained of this, especially in respect to his last ruler, that on public occasions, he would indulge himself at the table beyond what was prudent, comely or healthful; and yet the Reformer said, "I do not bargain away my liberty." I rather think that this man was built up square from the ground; and while we may differ from him, as he sometimes differed from himself, we must agree that, upon the whole:

> "He was a man, take him all in all:
> You shall not look upon his like again."

In his courage, in his integrity, in his wholesouledness, in his generosity—a generosity which drew around his table, so hospitable in its spread, always somebody: were it poor boarding students, curious travelers, or divers learned theologians. You never knew a small-souled, close-fisted, tight-skinned man to have any magnetic power. No covetous man was ever a people's idol—they love generosity, and Luther was generous everywhere;

the recipient of many gifts, he gave more than he got. He embraced in his arms the hearts of all who came near him.

Well, perhaps one had better not say too much upon this subject; yet will I venture one remark more. Luther was a genius. He had a creative intellect. When a man like Luther is raised up, he does work, which gives work to subordinate men for ages. Now we always mention Luther and Knox and Calvin and Zwingle together as reformers—and sometimes Erasmus and Melancthon. But Luther is really the only man that constitutes a center around which all the others harmoniously find their obits of revolution.

Luther was a man of ideas, a man of convictions, and a man of affections. My hearers, the motive powers of this world are not abstract ideas. The motive powers of this world are the affections. And, when I look over a congregation like this, and think of the little grains of affection that are hidden in every heart, as I go from one to another up and down these pews: these mothers, these sisters, these husbands, these daughters, these sons, these sweethearts; when I think of all this that underlies society, I know where its motive powers are. These little combinations of power, that are hidden in the hearts of tens of thousands of people in every town and city have a lifting power like unto that of the ten thousand times ten thousand screws, which a

shrewd engineer put under Chicago, and with which he raised it up bodily to a safer and sounder and healthier level. So these affections, hidden through our homes and communities, are a power which lifts up men and women into the sunlight of a charity, 'which believeth all things and hopeth all things and endureth all things, and which never faileth.' But Luther's heart was as large as a mountain, and from it there streamed out, in the fullness of his soul, good will towards his dear fatherland, and towards all whom he could bring within reach of the gospel of God and his dear Son.

And when that good man, after all conflicts had pretty well passed, went on his visitation through the provinces of his Prince to set up churches, and provide an evangelical ministry—that mission was one of the saddest, and yet the pleasantest you can contemplate. It recalls Paul's mission tours through Asia Minor: preaching the gospel in the synagogues and gathering the little clusters of believers into household churches and neighborhood congregations, where the seed of divine truth might be preserved. It was like the work, which John Wesley did, when he went over England organizing his class-meetings and scattering the seeds of Methodism in all that land. So Luther went from village to village, and oh the ignorance, the superstition, the poverty he encountered! Priests who hardly knew enough to

read the Creed or the Lord's Prayer intelligently. People who were Christians, and who yet did not believe that they could spare the time to commit the Lord's Prayer—it was too long. There he went and worked like a priest, like a city missionary—down in the slums, among the poor, among the lowly. But he was building a pyramid, the lowest strata of which might rest upon the ground, yet its sloping sides should terminate in an apex that was far up in the sunlight—a pyramid which should stand forever.

Now my Christian friends, we cannot afford to forget such men as Luther. They are God's gift to the human race. They come only once in a great while. They come for a special purpose, and when God finds the work, he finds the workman. And so when the hour had struck for a new movement in religion, he called for the man; and this man came.

But Luther was not a revolutionist. He was a conservative man, strange as that may seem. I admit that his Reformation in its results bordered close on revolution. But he stood out staunchly for the old paths, and it was simply his attempt to bring back God's people to the immovable foundation of God's word, of which they had lost sight because of the human debris, which now for a long time covered it over, that brought the sword.

Luther was not a theologian. We do not think of him as such. When we speak of this re-

former, he does not come before us in the character of a theologian. Melancthon does, and Calvin does and so does Zwingle. But Luther was "the Reformer." He was the great, imperial genius, who made work for all these other kingly men, and set them a field in which they could work. Luther was the father of a religion, of a *religion,* I say, which Calvin was not. Calvin was the author of a theological system,—a series of speculations and formulæ set forth in the most logical and classical and clearest of styles. A work laid up by a master mind, all the stones hewn "after the similitude of a palace," carried up plumb and smooth to the top, and roofed in; of solidest workmanship and of solidest material. But it was human. He built it evenly, if you please, from the corner-stone to the cap-stone, and put all his skill upon it, and all his knowledge into it. A very cathedral of thought. But though built so well, it was after all but a human structure, and the envious tooth of time had sworn to bring it down. As the old Greek said: time is envious of men's work.

Luther built no structure of this kind. The Reformation was not a construction of his mind. He planted trees, shade trees and fruit trees, the olive and the vine. They might die, but they had in them the seeds of succession; and they did die, but they had their successors, and the shade of these goodly trees should be like the shadow of

God in the wilderness, it should journey across the desert for the guidance of the Lord's people and for their protection.

It is a rather sad thought to me, but I will indicate it to you to show the difference between the man of ideas and the man of systems. I said Calvinism was not a reformation, neither was it a religion; it was a theory, a working theory to be sure, but still a theory. Being a series of abstract propositions which sought so to co-ordinate all scripture teachings, so that students of theology might read and refer them intelligently. But look at what it is, to show the want of vitality there was in it. Where is the intense Calvinism of the Synod of Dort? Where is it in the Holland of to-day? Where to-day is the puritanism of New England, as seen in the Westminister Assembly's confession, and where is the Calvinism of old England, except in her thirty-nine articles? What has befallen the Calvinism of Scotland? Modified and withered and adulterated, until we are afraid it is worse than Romanism, because it is rationalism. Where is the Calvinism of Geneva? of the south side of the Alps? And the Calvinism that was left in France? Europe says it is not in me, and America says it is not in me. These are human conceptions. They change, they wear out. But this living eternal word of God, with power to reproduce itself in men's hearts and lives, never can wear out. While one generation passes away

another comes to be instructed out of this word. Here are the trees that bear their fruit, in all the seasons of the year, and through the centuries,—"for the word of the Lord abideth forever."

Now, then, respecting Luther, I may say, in conclusion, that his name is before the world, somewhat as Schiller's Bell, in that most beautiful of his poems. It has been lifted out of the pit, freed from the mold and burnished. Behold, it rises up greater and grander, until it is lodged in the belfry—way above the turmoil, and strife, and trouble of the world in the streets below—speaking peace and quiet to men;—with heaven for its tent—the blue outstretched heaven—neighbor to the thunder, whose voice it shall echo. There it hangs; swinging with melodious sound; wafting it away off to the north, away off to the south, and ringing out in all directions a word of peace a word of hope, a word of consolation; speaking to the earth below of the heavens above, and drawing all men's hearts from this lower evil world to that upper and better country. So methinks God has hung the name of Luther in the belfry of the world. What shall be said of Luther, that he was great? He bore one special mark of greatness: his sublime discontent. Men that are satisfied with things as they are, are never great men, nor useful. They live on the accumulation of the past, and leave nothing for posterity. The men that leave most are the greatest. Luther

left a large legacy—it is far from being exhausted yet. Protestantism has a future—but let her beware of looking backward, or merely erecting trophies. May the noble discontent of her leader dwell in her, as it dwelt in him. And now let us turn, and see his sun go down.

Luther went to Eisleben, where he was born,—to die. He went there on an errand of mercy. He went to mediate between the Counts of Mansfield, sovereigns of his dear little fatherland, and the beatitude of the peacemaker went with him. While doing this good work, the good man died and was gathered to his fathers, and there was great mourning made for him. They bore forth his remains with many honors, with outriders and heralds and noblemen and footmen. They carried them down to Wittenberg, that they might rest in the city of his labors, and, that being dead, he might continue to speak as he has, through all the centuries already flown, and those that shall yet flow. Let him rest in peace in his honored grave, where we drop our tears of gratitude for what he has done. He was a Protestant, so are we. He was a Christian who trusted in God for salvation, so, I trust and hope, are we. "He rests from his labors, and his works do follow him." God grant us the same honor, and the same repose.

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